

63. The total number of cases detected in the Circle decreased by 67, while the number compounded increased by 103, facts which appear to indicate that on the whole greater leniency was displayed towards offenders.

64. Arranged in Form I prescribed by Government Resolution No. 5148 of 9th July 1897, the cases fall under the different categories as follows :—

Division.	CASES TAKEN INTO COURT.				CASES COMPOUNDED.				CASES UNDETECTED.				TOTAL CASES.				Grand Total of Cases.
	Injury to Forests by fire.	Unauthorized felling or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission, or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	Injury to Forests by fire.	Unauthorized felling or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission, or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	Injury to Forests by fire.	Unauthorized felling or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission, or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	Injury to Forests by fire.	Unauthorized felling or appropriation of wood and minor forest produce.	Grazing without permission, or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.	Other offences.	
Northern Division, Kánara..	1	6	...	3	...	10	...	...	60	4	...	...	61	20	...	3	84
Southern do.	...	48	...	3	...	57	...	...	81	7	...	...	81	112	...	3	196
Western do.	...	40	...	7	...	48	...	2	72	16	...	3	72	104	...	13	189
Belgaum ...	...	21	3	...	...	155	...	12	128	67	...	...	128	243	3	12	386
Dhárwár ...	...	7	1	...	...	14	...	...	66	19	...	...	66	40	1	...	127
Bijápúr ...	...	17	2	4	...	31	2	...	...	1	...	...	...	49	4	4	67
Kolába ...	7	159	9	44	9	94	5	8	114	302	...	...	130	555	14	52	751
Ratnágiri ...	...	6	...	2	...	15	...	1	3	28	...	3	3	49	...	6	68
Total ...	8	304	15	63	9	424	7	23	544	444	...	6	561	1,172	22	92	1,847

(2).—Protection from Fire.

65. The following table shows the results of fire-protection-measures reported for each division :—

Division.	AREA IN SQUARE MILES.			Percentage of failures to area attempted.	Cost.		Proportion of area under fire-protection to total area of reserves.
	Attempted.	Failures.	Protected.		Per square mile protected.	Per acre protected.	
					Rs.	Pies.	
Northern Division of Kánara ...	* 364.60	78.17	286.43	21.43	17.56	5.27	*144.7
Southern do. ...	174.06	22.51	151.55	12.93	28.26	8.47	34.2
Western do. ...	265.29	0.43	264.86	.16	11.54	3.46	52.6
Belgaum ...	185.12	7.40	177.72	3.99	15.64	4.69	27.82
Dhárwár ...	55.57	3.72	51.85	6.69	19.13	5.74	15.23
Bijápúr ...	114.67	...	114.67	...	1.50	.45	73.94
Kolába ...	130.49	2.05	128.44	1.57	5.38	1.61	29.72
Ratnágiri ...	18.82	0.02	18.80	.10	.90	.27	.85
Total in 1896-97 ...	1,308.62	114.30	1,194.32	8.73	14.25	4.28	44.96
Total in 1895-96 ...	1,441.67	29.49	1,412.18	2.04	17.31	5.19	51.12
Increase or decrease in 1896-97 ...	—133.05	+84.81	—217.86	+6.69	—3.06	—0.91	—6.16

* Includes part of the area of Sapa gazetted under Section 19 of the Forest Act during the year.

66. A smaller area was fire-traced in all divisions (excepting Bijápúr, Kolába and Ratnágiri) owing to the limited funds sanctioned for the work. The cost per square mile decreased from Rs. 17.31 to Rs. 14.25. The failures reported were, however, a good deal larger.

67. The comparatively large failures of the operations is partly ascribed to an abnormally dry year which increased the danger of accidental fire, and partly to the fact that the burnt areas are now given more accurately than they formerly were.

68. The percentage of failures was greatest in Northern Division of Kánara (21·43) and least in Ratnágiri (·10).

69. The apparent decrease in the percentage of area protected from fire to the total area of reserves, is owing to about 760 square miles of "Protected" forests having been converted into "Reserved" during the year under report.

70. As regards the want of success which attended attempts at fire-protection in the Northern Division of Kánara, the Divisional Officer reports that the causes of fires in most of the cases are not known with certainty, but are attributed to dacoits and way-farers; and to villagers in Supa who deliberately set fire with a view to induce an early and good crop of grass. The same causes apply equally to the forests of Yellápur and Mundgod in the Southern Division of Kánara, where fire-protection, though not much more successful, is not as bad as in the Northern Division of Kánara.

71. The number of fires that occurred during the year in the Northern Division of Kánara, was 61 against 37 in the preceding year, and the number of cases in which offenders were discovered was only 1.

72. The area attempted in Yellápur and Mundgod of the Southern Division of Kánara, amounted to 174·06 square miles against 223·67 in 1895-96. Failures were very few in the most valuable forests of Yellápur; the percentage of failure was 4·3 for 96·60 square miles of area attempted in Yellápur, while that for 77·46 square miles attempted in the less valuable forests of Mundgod amounted to 23·5. The fires in most cases in Mundgod, are attributed to carelessness on the part of the people from the famine-affected area, who were admitted into the forests to graze large herds of cattle in the latter part of September when there was practically no rain. The cause of increase in cost is reported to have been due to operations which were carried out in the Mundgod Range earlier than usual on account of the early ending of the rains. Owing to want of funds, no special measures were adopted in the Sirsi and Siddápur ranges.

73. The number of fires reported from this division amounts to 81, but in none were the offenders detected.

74. In the Western Division of Kánara, operations were carried out only in the Kárwár and Ankola ranges, no attempts having been made to specially protect the forests of the Kumta and Honávar ranges. A larger area was fire-traced in the Kárwár Range, while the area attempted in the Ankola Range remained the same as in the previous year. The year under report was a most unfavourable one in Kánara owing to the long drought, but, nevertheless, the protection afforded in this division was very satisfactory. Seventy-two fires were reported, but no offenders were detected.

75. The area under protection in Belgaum was decreased by 102·5 square miles. A larger area of valuable forests was, however, attempted in the Khánápur Range, with better results. The cost persquare mile was Rs. 15·64 against Rs. 11·26 of 1895-96.

76. The number of fires reported from this division amounted to 128 against 246 in the previous year, but in no case were the offenders detected.

77. The area attempted in Dhárwár shows a decrease (10·58 square miles) and the results reported compare favourably with those of the previous year, except in regard to the cost which increased from Rs. 8·92 to Rs. 19·13 per square mile. There were 86 reported fires in the division.

78. In Bijápur, the area attempted was about the same as in the previous year and the protection afforded is most satisfactory. There were no forest-fires during the year, which is quite an unusual event in this district. It is reported that no fire-traces were burnt as there was no grass in the specially protected area owing to the absence of rains.

79. In Kolábi, the area attempted was increased by 18.55 square miles, and the results reported compare favourably with those of the preceding year. The number of fires reported was 130 as against 179 in 1895-96. The causes of fires in most of the cases, are attributed to *radb*-burning in private fields. Such cases can be dealt with under Rule 2 of the rules under Section 25 (b) of the Forest-Act, but it is not always possible to obtain conviction under this rule, unless the *radb*-material is burnt in a field adjoining reserved forests, and the precautions required to be taken are neglected.

80. In Ratnágiri, the protection afforded was quite as good as usual. There were three fires reported during the year.

81. The following areas are reported to have escaped fire without the adoption of special measures :—

				Acre.
Northern Division, Kánara	...	...	...	353,159
Southern do.	...	...	...	819,910
Western do.	...	...	...	523,174
Belgaum	...	...	...	312,866
Dhárwár	...	...	...	182,466
Bijápur	...	...	...	83,234
Kolába	...	...	...	199,347
Total				2,474,156

82. The following table shows the number of fires which were reported and the number of cases in which the offenders were detected : —

Division.		Number of fires reported.	NUMBER OF CASES IN WHICH OFFENDERS WERE DETECTED.				
			Taken into Court.			Let off with warning.	Total.
			Convictions.	Acquittals.	Undergoing trial at close of the year.		
Northern Division, Kánara	...	61	1	2	1	...	4
Southern do.	...	81	...	...	...	...	...
Western do.	...	72	...	...	...	...	...
Belgaum	...	128	...	...	...	...	...
Dhárwár	...	86	...	...	...	...	...
Bijápur	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kolába	...	130	...	...	7	...	16
Ratnágiri	...	3	...	...	...	2	2
Total		561	1	2	8	2	22

83. Of the 22 cases in which offenders were discovered, 2 were dismissed with a warning, as they were not wilful acts, 9 cases were compounded and 11 were brought up for trial. Three cases, out of the four taken into Court in the Northern Division of Kánara, were pending trial from the previous year. Conviction was obtained in only 1 of them, the remaining 2 having ended in acquittals.

84. The details of prosecutions for offences by fire, are given in the following statement in Form II prescribed by Government Resolution No. 5148 of 9th July 1897 :—

Division.	DETAILS OF PROSECUTIONS FOR OFFENCES BY FIRE.						REMARKS.
	Serial number of fire.	Acres burnt.	Character of offences (whether careless or intentional.)	Whether acquitted or convicted.	Section of law under which convicted.	Amount of punishment.	
Northern Division, Kánara	1 (35)*	3	Intentional.	...	...	...	Pending trial at close of the year.
Southern do.	...	...	...	...	...	...
Western do.	...	...	...	...	...	...
Belgaum	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dhárwár	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bijápúr	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kolába	...	7	...	...	...	...
	(3, 7—9, 11—13)*	55	Careless.	...	...	...	Do. do. * Serial numbers in the registers.
Ratnágiri	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	8	58	...	...	...	...

85. The origins of fires and the acreage burnt are as given below in Form III prescribed by the same Resolution:—

Division.	(A).		(B)		(C) FIRES BEGINNING INSIDE THE RESERVE OR FIRE-TRACED AREA.																Total (A), (B) and, (C).							
	Fires caused by accident or through carelessness in burn- ing fire-lines.		Fires entering the Forests by crossing exterior fire-traces.		OWING TO CARELESSNESS OR ACCIDENT.								BY INTENTIONAL FIRING.															
					By workmen employed in the Forests, by pur- chasers of Forest pro- duce and by Yah-cutters.				By villagers, travellers, &c., passing through the Forests.				By railway engines.		By lightning or by fire- balloons.		In order to obtain new grass.		In order to turn out game or to reduce cover.				Maliciously fired.		Total.		Causes unknown.	
					Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.			Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.	Number of fires.	Area burnt in acres.
Northern Division, Kánara	4	865	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	...	...	...	...	1	3	56	49,163	61	50,031		
Southern do.	1	165	11	9,605	12	9,770	69	28,304	81	38,074			
Western do.	...	1	3	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	70	978	72	933
Belgaum	68	4,735	...	...	60	1,530	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	128	6,265			
Dhárwár	...	1	94	17	2,068	...	...	53	5,189	3	102	...	...	...	...	7	1,045	...	...	7	1,045	5	8,754	80	17,852
Bijápúr			
Kolába	...	2	8	22	264	1	4	42	539	2	37	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	61	2,361	130	3,213
Ratnágiri	2	12	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	13		
Total	4	105	113	3,544	2	6	156	7,259	5	139	...	...	1	3	8	1,210	11	9,605	20	10,818	261	89,560	561	116,431		

86. It will be seen from the above table that causes as to the origin of fires were not known in nearly 50 per cent. of the number of fires; and that more than 25 per cent. of the fires were due to carelessness on the part of villagers or travellers passing through the forest, fires that are difficult to guard against owing to rights of way and to water accorded to villagers.

(3).—*Regulation of Grazing and Protection from Cattle.*

87. The area closed to all animals amounts to 659 square miles, to browsers 1,266, and that open to all animals to 3,321. Details of the areas closed and left open, respectively, in each of the several divisions, are given in Appendix 54.